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SUBJECT: SOMALIA -- RECONCILIATION AND MEDIATION PLANNING
AMONG THE INTERNATIONALS

REF: NAIROBI 2738

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) The Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) issued a statement July 5 (reported reftel) indicating renewed international community (IC) support for reconciliation among members of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs). The SRSG proposed to the IC members of the Coordinating and Monitoring Committee (I-CMC) a plan for mediation among the various Somali leaders in the face of reports of continuing military buildups and factionalization among TFI members. END SUMMARY.

YUSUF IN SOMALIA, NO FIGHTING YET

2. (SBU) SRSG Ambassador Francois Fall provided the political briefing at a July 5 meeting of the international community members of the Somali Coordinating and Monitoring Committee (I-CMC). He noted that Somali President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed had apparently returned July 1 to his home region in Puntland. Amid speculation as to Yusuf's whereabouts, much of it imagining the president putting into operation a plan of attack on his opponents in Mogadishu, reporting from Somalia indicated that he had returned to the port town of Bosasso.

3. (SBU) In the capital, the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Assembly, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, attempted to convene a session of the parliament on July 2. Finding it impossible to assemble a quorum of members, those who did gather confined themselves to forming a committee from their number to open a political dialogue with the Prime Minister. PM Ghedi, for his part, reportedly struck a reconciliatory tone in his July 1 speech in celebration of the independence of the former Italian Somalia, then headed off to Sirte, Libya to attend the Summit of African Union Heads of Government.

UNITY OF ACTION

4. (SBU) SRSG Fall next obtained the group's approval to issue a statement calling for respect of the UN arms embargo, reduction in tensions, and renunciation of military maneuvering (reftel). He then turned to the business of rallying the IC behind the principles agreed in October 2004 in Stockholm. He emphasized to the I-CMC the importance of cohesion among all the actors. Fall noted that, while efforts to secure peace were taking place on both the bilateral and multilateral fronts, bilateral approaches that were not carefully calibrated to avoid fueling conflict could be detrimental to the overall peace process. He urged country representatives to not take on approaches which could undermine both his leadership as SRSG as well as the legitimacy of the initiatives the I-CMC had tasked him to take.

5. (SBU) Ambassador Fall observed that current reporting and monitoring indicated escalating tensions in Somalia, at least in part because of a continuing arms buildup. He expressed his concern that one or the other of the two major groups within the TFIs could be preparing preemptive military action. Fall pushed for support, especially from the donor country members of the I-CMC, for a course of action over the next weeks to mid-September, directed at bringing the Somali leaders to agreement on the key issues still blocking the return of governance to Somalia.

ACTION PLAN

6. (SBU) The SRSG presented a draft framework for a mediation effort, designed to bring all relevant leaders in the TFIs to

the table for a final resolution of outstanding issues. His objective was to have the leaders ready to formalize an agreement on the questions of the seat of government, security in the capital, and requests for a peace support operation from outside forces by early September, so that a High Level CMC meeting could be convened by mid-September as a vehicle for "blessing" the agreement, and pledging short-term support.

17. (SBU) Several I-CMC members considered Amb. Fall's original proposal to be too prescriptive, lacking as it did at that point any significant Somali input. Others stressed that the IC has a right and obligation to push the Somalis toward an agreement to allow for the return of governance, as agreed with the Somalis under the Declaration of Principles that was one of the results of the October 2004 Stockholm conference on Somalia. That said, most agreed that the focus of discussions between Amb. Fall, on one hand, and the Somali leaders on the other, would have to be the safety and security of Mogadishu and the need for increased dialogue among the groups that have formed within the TFIs.

SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE

18. (SBU) Somalia Watcher joined representatives from the UK, Sweden, Denmark and the EC in stating that the SRSG's initiative was clearly within the remit that the IC had given him in Stockholm. That said, the details of the SRSG's plan clearly remained to be sorted out, and definitive support for the approach would have to await discussion with capitals. Comments focused on the need for quick action to defuse tensions beyond the issuance of the SRSG's statement, and on beginning initial stages of mediation immediately by pushing the most intransigent leaders to make clear to the SRSG their "non-negotiables". Some thought a time-table looking to conclude discussions in September was not sufficiently ambitious given the stakes. Others pointed out that a process of active SRSG mediation might well take some weeks in order to hammer out the differences, leaving the final agreement to be negotiated in early September, and the High Level CMC blessing for mid-month.

ITALY -- MUST HAVE CONSENSUS

19. (SBU) The Italian representative, Senator Mario Raffaelli, gave a very cautious endorsement to the SRSG proposal. He stressed that the SRSG's mandate for leadership was firmly rooted in his first developing a consensus of the IC behind his proposals. Raffaelli echoed the intervention of the Kenyan Ambassador to Somalia on the subject of continuing financial assistance, calling for no slowing of aid to the TFIs during the mediation period. (NOTE: This was an apparent reference to Italy's intention to disburse some Euros 2.7 million toward district-level reconciliation projects strongly associated with the Yusuf side of the TFIs. END NOTE)

WORK TO BE DONE

110. (SBU) The SRSG summarized the discussion as having indicated an agreement in principle that he develop an aggressive strategy for mediation among the different groupings within the TFIs. The focus of this mediation should be squarely on the questions of the capital city, the seat of government, security arrangements, and external military assistance. Finally, the objective should be to move as rapidly as possible from polling relevant leaders to assembling leaders for tough negotiations leading to agreement and a blessing from the IC. In the meanwhile, all members of the I-CMC appeared committed to unity of both action and message, making clear that military posturing or action was unacceptable. They again reinforced the principle of an inclusive and reconciliation-based TFG.

111. (SBU) Amb. Fall committed to pulling together a new formulation of this mediation framework before departing Nairobi July 8 en route to the UNSC discussions on Somalia, slated for July 14. In a side conversation with Somalia Watcher, UN Political Office for Somalia Senior Advisor Babafemi Badejo suggested calling an informal meeting of Nairobi-based representatives of current UNSC member countries for a rapid review of the framework, and a discussion of the key issues before the Council, before the SRSG's departure.
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